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Supes Approve Budget Boost for SFPD

By Thomas K. Pendergast

After some verbal sparring between the mayor and some supervisors, the Board of Supervisors approved a $26.8 million bailout to the SFPD to pay more overtime for police officers.

San Francisco Mayor London Breed's supporters included Supervisors Joel Engardio and Catherine Stefani. Running some resistance were Supervisors Dean Preston, Connie Chan and Myrna Melgar, among others.

This latest feud started when Breed's supporters held a press conference on March 7 in the Tenderloin District, part of Preston's turf.

"Sadly, your supervisor at the Tenderloin isn't here today and that's a real problem," Breed said. "We are short 541 cops and we are feeling it. It's not just about showing up and the arrest; it's also about the investigation. There's work that has to go into that and we need police officers to do that."

Breed then leveled her sights at the remaining supervisors.

"We have got to put pressure on the Board of Supervisors, minus the four who are co-sponsors … to get this work done. The future of the City depends on it. The safety of the community depends on it," she said.

Engardio said Taraval Station serves the largest geographic area in the City – from Twin Peaks to the Pacific Ocean and from Golden Gate Park to Daly City – with 130,000 residents.

"On any given night, there are seven police officers patrolling the streets," Engardio said. "It would be lower if not

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Kehinde Wiley Debuts Ambitious Exhibit at the de Young

Kehinde Wiley stands in front of his painting titled, "Femme piquée par un serpent (Mamadou Gueye)," 2022, oil on canvas. Story on page 14. *Photo by Noma Faingold.*

Stern Grove's Trocadero Clubhouse Smashed by Falling Tree

By Thomas K. Pendergast

For 131 years, the building now known as the Trocadero Clubhouse in Sigmund Stern Grove hosted generations of San Franciscans. On March 11, it became the final resting place of an 85-foot-tall eucalyptus tree.

The San Francisco Recreation and Park Department (RPD) reported that the tree caused severe damage to the SF Historical Landmark building.

Park rangers responded to an alarm in the clubhouse at 5:30 a.m. as a drenching storm passed over, discovering that the structure's roof and eave were partially crushed and the interior was flooded.

The building was later red-tagged by the SF Department of Building Inspection.

"This is soul crushing," said San Francisco Recreation and Park General Manager Phil Ginsburg. "The Trocadero and Stern Grove are San Francisco treasures. It will take political leadership, resources and community resolve to put the Trocadero back together again,"

Rec. and Park's Spokesperson Tamara Aparton said they are still evaluating the extent of the damage with a structural engineer, so no decisions have been made about whether to attempt repairing it or call it a total loss and demolish it entirely.

The latter option, however, is unacceptable to historians on the west side of the City.

"It's a terrible tragedy," said David Gallagher, a founder of the Western Neighborhoods Project and a native San Franciscan. "I hope the city finds some way to restore this landmark that means so much to the people of San Francisco. I personally have memories of events there stretching back to my childhood. It would be a horrible loss if it was allowed to be demolished."

SF Heritage is an organization with the mission of preserving San Francisco's architectural and cultural identity.

SF Heritage's archivist and historian, Stephen "Woody" LaBounty, is also concerned that Rec. and Park will demolish instead of repair the building.

"It can be repaired, and I want to make sure they actually put the experts on the job to make sure they do everything

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Review: Local Museum Overflows With Immersive Art Experiences

By Alyson Wong

What do you call a herd or group of wild bunnies?

Embarking on the public indoor tour, "Into the Rabbit Hole," one of two in-person exploratory immersive art experiences offered at the Gregangelo Museum, reveals the peculiarly delightful answer you didn't know you needed – a fluffle.

A fluffle is what tour groups (two to six participants) are invited to become as they are guided into the rabbit hole of the Gregangelo Museum for an hour-long one-of-a-kind phantasmagorical art experience that has the potential to crack your mind, senses and maybe even heart wide open.

Just beyond fountain roundabouts and tucked away on a quiet unassuming residential street in the St. Francis Woods neighborhood, you'll find the Mediterranean-styled private residence of Gregangelo Herrera. A corkscrew Dali-esque grandfather clock peeking out of shrubbery and a rounded swiveling gate at the sidewalk are the only distinguishing signs that give away the home's curiosities within.

Herrea, a Lebanese and Mexican artist, grew up in San Francisco's Chinatown and was always drawn to the arts. While living in the home that organically morphed into the site for the Gregangelo

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Gregangelo Herrera (center) spontaneously picks up a djembe hand drum inviting California College of the Arts students to participate in a musical jam experience inside the Scentsorium Emporium room. *Photo by Alyson Wong.*

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Looking Back

Kinen Carvala

Sue Bierman Grove

What if the Golden Gate Park Panhandle had a freeway running through it?

Despite America's love affair with the automobile after World War II, no freeway directly connected the San Francisco/Oakland Bay Bridge and the Golden Gate Bridge between Hayes Valley and the Presidio, so traffic relied on city streets.

"A Report to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors on the Panhandle and Golden Gate Freeways: A Joint City-State Study" advocated for building both a "Panhandle Freeway" and a "Golden Gate Freeway." (The Golden Gate Freeway would have approximately followed San Francisco's northern bay shoreline.)

President Franklin D. Roosevelt was interested in using a highway construction program to provide jobs during the Great Depression. During World War II, U.S. General Dwight Eisenhower noted the advantage of Germany's highway network, the Autobahn. As president, Eisenhower called for an improved highway system in his 1954 State of the Union address to Congress, which passed the Federal-Aid Highway Act in 1956 and authorized $25 billion from fiscal years 1957 through 1969, according to the National Archives. The federal freeway funds had to be spent by 1972 or else the funds would revert to the general account, according to professor of geography Katherine M. Johnson.

Authorities behind highway construction focused narrowly on funding sources and traffic flow, not on what is today known as "environmental review," according to Johnson. It was left up to S.F. supervisors and local organizations to bring up these concerns during the public debate about freeways.

City and state officials butted heads over freeway plans. The City Planning Commission's special subcommittee criticized the State Division of Highways for recommending 2,101 dwelling units be cut along Oak Street for the Panhandle Freeway and losing more than 800 trees for a tunnel under Golden Gate Park's JFK Drive (then called Main Drive). San Francisco planning director James McCarthy had recommendations that would take up less land, according to Mel Wax reporting for the SF Chronicle on May 21, 1964. Mayor John F. Shelley was described as "still trying to play it cool" despite knowing that no tinkered route could get the votes of six supervisors.

Sue Reynolds was born on Aug. 5, 1924, in Fremont, Nebraska, according to her obituary in the Fremont Tribune. She attended local Midland Lutheran College where she met Arthur K. Bierman, whom she married in 1945. They had two children and later divorced. The Biermans settled in San Francisco in the 1950s. In an interview with Justin Germain from UC Berkeley, Arthur said he encouraged Sue, a stay-at-home mother, to get involved in activism.

A circle of trees, a plaque and three benches are all dedicated to Sue Bierman, who was a leader in the fight to stop a plan to run a freeway through the Panhandle on the east end of Golden Gate Park. ***Photo by Michael Durand.***

Sue and Arthur Bierman co-founded the Haight-Ashbury Neighborhood Council (HANC), one of the organizations behind a May 1964 rally at the Polo Field against the Panhandle Freeway, which was attended by thousands of protestors. According to SF Chronicle reporting, the International Longshore and Warehouse Union broke away from other pro-freeway labor groups. Union spokesman David Jenkins cited not only indefinite disruptions to the Park from construction but also the loss of homes in the Haight-Ashbury for 6,000 people, including union members. The "worst desecration of a beautiful area of San Francisco's history" is how Albert Meakin, co-chair of the Citizens' Committee to Save Golden Gate Park, described the Panhandle Freeway proposal. "Parents are urged to bring their children and turn out to show what Golden Gate Park means to us all," said Robert Barket, HANC logistics chairman.

Bierman with other mothers brought their children to Planning Commission hearings as part of their protest that freeway construction would destroy safe play areas for children and to show a different perspective on freeways to the overwhelmingly male supervisors previously presented with engineering information, writes Germain.

Bierman testified at 1:20 a.m. as the 59th witness against the Panhandle Freeway in front of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors in a February 1966 marathon hearing.

Here are some quotes attributed to Bierman by the SF Examiner:

"Here we are again … but the same things are missing. The interchanges aren't drawn. The models that would show us exactly how this freeway fits into the fabric of our neighborhood are not present. The trees haven't been counted …."

On March 21, 1966, a six-to-five vote of the Board of Supervisors rejected the state's freeway plan for a sixth and final time, according to Johnson. Supervisor Jack Morrisey was persuaded to vote against the Panhandle Freeway after a tour of the area where the proposed freeway would run through the park.

The ideas behind freeway revolt became mainstream, according to Johnson, when on Jan. 1, 1970, President Richard Nixon signed the National Environmental Policy Act into law, requiring a comprehensive environmental review for all projects funded with federal aid, including highways.

San Franciscans elected Bierman to the Board of Supervisors in 1992 and 1996. Because of term limits, she was ineligible to run in 2000, which is also when district elections of supervisors started.

Bierman served on the Planning Commission from her 1976 appointment by Mayor George Moscone until 1992 when newly elected Mayor Frank Jordan ended her tenure. Bierman was known as a dissenter on the Commission, opposing high rises that would shadow open spaces, according to Gerald Adams of the SF Chronicle.

Mayor Willie Brown pulled up in a limousine to Bierman's house on Sept. 5, 2001, whisking her away to a surprise ceremony dedicating a grove of trees with a plaque and three benches to her in the Panhandle near her house, according to the book "Legacy: Portraits of 50 Bay Area Environmental Elders." San Francisco Board of Supervisors President Tom Ammiano was also present, according to the SF Chronicle. The plaque says:

Dedicated September 5, 2001, to Honorable Susan J. Bierman

This beautiful grove of trees and greenery honors a true champion, who brought the neighborhoods together in an eight-year struggle to preserve the panhandle. Victory and what the nation called San Francisco's "Freeway Revolt" came in 1966 when, by one vote, the Board of Supervisors rejected plans to pave a freeway through this wooded concourse to Golden Gate Park. With the same courage, fervor, and concern for the city she loves, she served as a member of the San Francisco Planning Commission from 1976 until 1992, and as a supervisor from 1993 until 2001.

In 2003, Brown appointed Bierman to the Port Commission, which she was a member of at the time of her death on Aug. 7, 2006, at the age of 82.

The Honorable Susan J. Bierman Grove in the Panhandle is roughly 400 feet east of the intersection of JFK Drive and Stanyan Street, near Shrader Street.

Find an archive of Kinen Carvala's "Looking Back" columns at RichmondSunsetNews.com.

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Great Blue Herons Perform Annual Encore at Golden Gate Park's Stow Lake

By Nancy H. DeStefanis

Great Blue Herons have nested at Stow Lake in Golden Gate Park since at least 1993. Overall, 270 chicks have fledged at two sites – the island by the Stow Lake Boathouse and the island by the waterfall. The herons are charismatic birds; their courtship rituals are elaborate and beautiful. The chicks closely resemble little dinosaurs with punk mohawks.

Starting April 15, San Francisco Nature Education volunteers will show the herons and their chicks to the public through high-powered spotting scopes. The program runs six Saturdays and concludes May 20. The observation site is open at Stow Lake each Saturday, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Large signs mark the site's location. Children are welcome. The program is free, but donations are welcome.

This year, Heron Watch volunteers will lead family walks each Saturday around Stow Lake and on Strawberry Hill for children 7-12 accompanied by an adult. There is a suggested donation for adults; children are always free.

For more information and the observation locations map, go to sfnature.org or email info@sfnature.org. Nancy H. DeStefanis is the executive director of San Francisco Nature Education. She first discovered the nest at Stow Lake in Golden Gate Park in 1993.

They're back! Great Blue Herons have returned to nests at Stow Lake in Golden Gate Park. Pictured above is an adult heron with three chicks. *Photo by Jim Sullivan.*

2023 Concert Series at GG Park's Music Concourse Runs Through November

By Jack Quach

Free live music will greet listeners in Golden Gate Park once again throughout the majority of 2023. In late February, the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department announced the return of the free live music series at the popular bandshell, with 2023 marking the third series of performances that range from R&B and soul to salsa music.

"The most exciting part of this series is the accessibility," Daniel Montes, the communications manager for Rec. and Park, wrote. Not only is the concert series free, but it takes place at a central and iconic location in Golden Gate Park."

On March 1, the series titled "Illuminate Live" began a series set to continue through to November. Golden Gate Park, which serves as a central landmark in San Francisco connecting both the Sunset and Richmond districts, has long served as host for public events and activities.

The renewal of the concerts represents a continuation of efforts to re-establish community gatherings in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic peak. Also, Montes shared that the concerts' location provides the benefit of having a variety of options to reach the iconic music venue, including public transportation, the Golden Gate Park free shuttle, and parking spaces at the park.

The Illuminate Live series gained its original start in celebration of Golden Gate Park's 150th anniversary. However, because this celebration fell in 2020, the pandemic delayed its eventual kickoff date. Three years since, the series has benefitted from renovations to the bandshell and a multitude of performances that have taken place.

Many of the performances will take place in the late afternoon to evening hours, with recurring events such as "Friday Happy Hours," "Crucial Reggae Sundays" and "Singer/Songwriter Wednesdays." The series schedule also includes regular appearances of Sunday matinee concerts. Montes said the diversity of artists available through the free concert series "plays an important role. There's something for everyone – no matter what your music taste is."

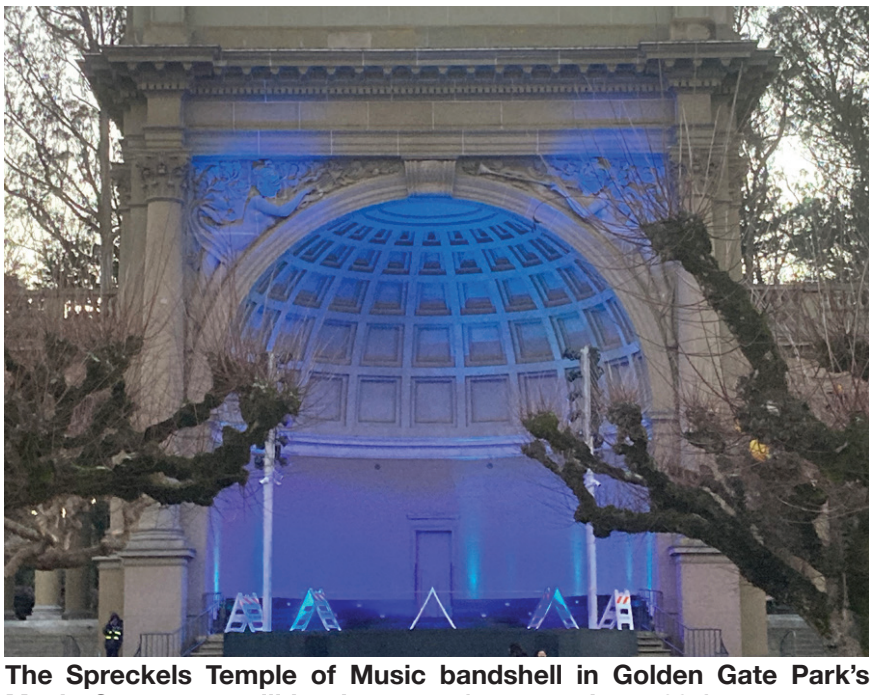
Additionally, Montes highlighted the fact that March featured all women or women-fronted bands to recognize International Women's Month.

The lineup of artists features a variety of musical and performance styles. In addition, highlighted events also spotlight cultural celebrations, such as a March 17 concert by Irish American musician Shana Morrison and her band, Caledonia, in recognition of St. Patrick's Day.

The 2023 run will cumulatively showcase more than 100 performances in the Golden Gate Bandshell.

"This event is for all ages and goes through November," Montes said. "Now in its third year, this series has become a reliable source for entertainment, meaning people who live or work nearby have come to count on this series as an option to unwind with live music."

A complete schedule of events in the "Illuminate Live" series can be found at goldengatebandshell.org/events/list.



The Spreckels Temple of Music bandshell in Golden Gate Park's Music Concourse will be the stage for more than 100 free concerts throughout 2023. Photo *by Michael Durand.*

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Legion of Honor Exhibit Explores the Spanish Influence on Sargent's Work

By Noma Faingold

Author Richard Louis Ormond, 84, perhaps the foremost expert on American expatriate artist John Singer Sargent (1856-1925), was marveling at the paintings while he walked through the six galleries of the "Sargent and Spain" exhibit at the Legion of Honor, which opened on Feb. 11 and runs through May 14.

"What does (Vincent) Van Gogh got that Sargent hasn't got?" he asked, knowing the answer. "He's highly experimental. These are almost abstract compositions."

London-based Ormond, who was awarded a CBE (Commander of the Order of the British Empire) for his cultural contributions as the former deputy director of the National Portrait Gallery and the director of the National Maritime Museum, as well as his many published works on Sargent and other artists, is pleased with the way the exhibition is laid out. As one of the curators of Sargent and Spain, he was invited to the opening.

"I like the spaciousness, in that each picture is given its room," he said. "It's also telling a story about the phases in Sargent's career. I think people like that."

The exhibit, which was first staged last fall at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., unfolds thematically in six sections, focusing on Sargent's seven visits to Spain, from 1879 to 1912. He spent significant time in 26 cities and towns, including Madrid, Seville and the island of Majorca. At the entrance to "Sargent and Spain," there is a large map on the wall, which traces his travels.

"One of the thrills of this exhibition is it gives us the vicarious pleasure of travel," said Emma Acker, associate curator of American Art at the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco. "In a sense, we can visit these destinations through the artworks on view and really see Spain through Sargent's eyes."

The West Coast exclusive exhibition features a wide range of Sargent's oils, watercolors and pencil studies, as well as never-before-seen photographs from his personal collection. Even though he lived in Europe his whole life (residing in Paris and London), he influenced a generation of American artists.

One gallery is devoted to how such Spanish masters as Diego Velázquez, El Greco and Francisco Goya influenced his work. Sargent studied the expressive brushwork and high-contrast realism used by his hero, Velázquez. From 1879 to 1895, Sargent was registered as a copyist.

"White Ships" by John Singer Sargent. ***Photo by the Brooklyn Museum, courtesy of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco.***

In the next chapter of his career, Sargent became one of the most sought-after society portraitists of his era in both Europe and America.

"His works seem to epitomize the glamour and elegance, but also some of the excesses of the so-called Gilded Age," said Acker.

Creatively, Sargent, who was born in Florence, Italy to American parents, was not satisfied with his commercial success as a portrait artist. He was looking for more substance and found it in Spain, in its landscapes, architecture, people, culture and spiritual traditions.

Galleries titled, "Dance and Music," "The Land and Its People," "Majorca" and "Religion and Spirituality" in the exhibition cover scenes that most captivated the artist.

Sargent was enamored with flamenco music and was inspired by an internationally celebrated dancer, Carmen Daucet Moreno (known as La Carmencita). Two notable paintings of her are on display, one of her in mid-performance with her arm dramatically outstretched and the other a large-scale, glamorous portrait of her in a gold-colored embroidered gown, looking like a diva of her era.

"Sargent just skims that embroidery at the bottom," said Ormond, referring to the light touch of the brushstrokes. "It's one ravishing piece."

Ormond's favorite section of "Sargent and Spain" is the Majorca gallery. During this period, the artist was immersed in depicting everyday life and everyday people.

"Those are very earthy, powerful pictures," he said.

In particular, Ormond seemed endlessly fascinated by the complex, yet soothing painting, Majorcan Fisherman (1908), which is composed of a young fisherman off to the left side under a thatched roof, fishing gear draped over a flimsy wood railing, with the rich blue Mediterranean in the background. There's plenty of shadow mixed with

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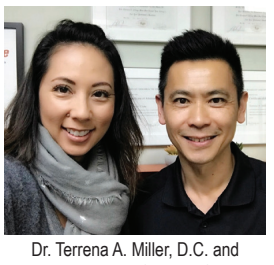

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Real Estate

John M. Lee

Banking Crisis Explained

March brought us news that two of our local banks are in crisis mode. The feds came in and shut down Silicon Valley Bank. Its competitor, First Republic Bank, is still under tremendous pressure at the time of this writing.

Banks are institutions that provide financial services to individuals, businesses and other organizations. In order to make money, they take deposits from customers and use these deposits to make loans to others who pay interest on the loans. They earn a profit by charging a higher rate than they pay on the deposits.

Banks also offer other financial services, such as credit cards, checking accounts, savings accounts, certificates of deposit (CDs), and various types of loans. They may also provide investment services, such as mutual funds and brokerage accounts. Banks make money by charging a fee on these services. They also invest the deposits in various financial instruments, such as stocks and bonds, to earn additional income.

To insure the safety and soundness of the financial system, the Federal Reserve oversees the operations and has rules and regulations in place to prevent fraud, protect consumers and promote financial stability.

What happened in the 2008 banking crisis is different from this time around. In 2008, the underwriting guidelines for real estate loans were loose and easily manipulated. It felt like, if a borrower was alive and breathing, he could get a loan. Bad credit doesn't matter; no income, no problem; don't have a job, lenders will create one for you. Corruption was widespread, and it led to foreclosure problems.

Large financial institutions, including Washington Mutual, Wachovia, Bear Sterns, Lehman Brothers and Merrill Lynch, all failed and were absorbed by other companies. The feds had to provide large bailouts to Bank of America, Citigroup, Countrywide, AIG and others to insure that our banking system did not fail altogether. Since then, the feds have made changes and regulations to safeguard against this and it is currently working.

This time around, it is a different problem. We have gone through a very low interest rate environment where the banks can get deposits almost interest free. The Fed Funds rate rose from zero to 4.5% in the past 12 months.

The banks were making investments all this time when their cost of capital was near zero percent. Some financial instruments have long-term yields. Since the Fed Funds rates start increasing, banks have to pay more interest for their funds and thus their returns on their investments started going down. When customers started demanding their deposits back, the financial institutions did not have all the funds available and had to sell their investments at losses, leading to further financial and liquidity issues. To their defense, no bank can withstand a large run on its deposits.

Banks collapsing impact real estate and mortgages through reduced access to credits. Banks are the primary source of lending for mortgages and other types of loans. When they fail, it reduces the supply of credit, and other banks may become more risk averse and tighten up their underwriting criteria. This could lead to a slowdown in the real estate market as potential buyers are unable to obtain financing. In addition, banks might increase interest rates, making it more expensive for buyers, leading to a decline in home affordability, and a demand for housing.

Realizing this, the feds and other larger banks have stepped up at this time to try to prevent this from happening. The feds tried to calm depositors by promising that all funds exceeding the FDIC limit of $250,000 will be guaranteed. Eleven larger banks have come together to lend First Republic $30 billion to try to keep the bank solvent. However, the stock kept going down. Whether this will work, we will see, but this goes to show how much the other banks are vested in the banking system. We cannot have our whole banking system collapse.

The feds met the third week in March and decided to raise rates by .25% in their continual effort to battle inflation. Prior to SVB collapsing, the consensus was that they were going to raise the Fed Funds rate by .5 or .75%. This is an acknowledgement that rate increases possibly led to the current banking issues and hope that this will ease the problem.

Only time will tell what will happen here. My guess is that one of the larger banks will buy out First Republic. But other banks rumored to be in trouble might also need to merge with larger banks. Stay tuned as there is never a dull moment in real estate!

John M. Lee is a broker with Compass specializing in the Richmond and Sunset districts. If you have any real estate questions, call him at 415-465-0505 or email at johnlee@isellsf.com. Find an archive of John M. Lee's columns at RichmondSunsetNews.com.

Sunset Homes Sold in March*

Address	Bed	Bath	Sq. Ft.	Price
2378 44th Ave.	2	2	1,306	$1,300,000
2450 31st Ave.	2	1	1,200	1,450,000
3644 Ulloa St.	3	2	1,664	1,480,000
1547 40th Ave.	3	2	1,936	1,525,000
3425 Quintara St.	3	1	1,214	1,560,000
2179 27th Ave.	2	1	1,400	1,600,000
1915 30th Ave.	2	2	1,175	1,650,000
1426 33rd Ave.	4	3.5	2,195	1,980,000
1476 36th Ave.	3	1.5	2,116	2,150,000
2275 45th Ave.	3	2.5	2,415	2,410,000

**Partial listing. Source: M.L.S.*

Sargent

Continued from page 4

sun-soaked light in the piece.

"As you look at it, you aren't sure where you are. You are completely ungrounded," Ormond said. "It's like a mosaic, like a tapestry. It's all about the paint, pattern and rhythm. When you come up close, it all seems to be messy. When you step back, it all falls into place. How did he know it was all going to work? It was just instinctual. He was so bold. He was always testing himself. He didn't waste anything."

Ormond continued to talk about the painting as if he were still discovering new things about it, even though he's been writing about Sargent for decades.

"Look at the fisherman's shirt and all the different tones. There's so much there," he said.

"Sargent and Spain" runs through May 14 at the Legion of Honor. March 20, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., will be Sargent and Spain Access Day. For more information and sign-up form: www.famsf.org/exhibitions/sargent-and-spain#events.

Emma Acker (left), associate curator of American Art at the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, and author Richard Louis Ormond, preeminent expert on John Singer Sargent, discuss various aspects of the artist's work at a recent pre-opening event at the Legion of Honor. *Photo by Noma Faingold.*

The members of the Park-Presidio Sunset Lions Club have been serving our community for the past 75 years. We continue to do so despite the challenges of a pandemic. Soon, we will resume regular meetings and invite our west side neighbors to participate.

Lions Pride: Serving the west side for the past 75 years!

Commentary

Quentin L. Kopp

High-Speed Train Project Off the Rails

In a Dec. 6, 1962, speech in New York City, then-assistant secretary of defense stated: "I think the inherent right of the government to lie to save itself when faced with nuclear disaster is basic." The California High Speed Rail Authority's Northern California Regional Director Boris Lipkin in the San Mateo Daily Journal's Nov. 17, 2022, edition applied such falsity doctrine to that failed project. (I have publicly pleaded guilty of creating such state body with 1996 legislation as a then-state senator.)

Critics have charged that California's once highly publicized electrified high-speed rail project is now a chimera or, worse, a tax-eating boondoggle. A Nov. 17, 2022, letter to the editor from the California High Speed Rail Authority's Northern California Regional Director in The Daily Journal denying such failure reminded of a wry witticism: "Exaggeration is a blood relative to falsehood and almost as bad."

This high-speed flack, paid with taxpayer dollars, accused me (whose legislative authorship created the Authority and enabled his subsequent flackery appointment) of "factually inaccurate statement." Instead, he declared that 119 miles of high-speed track are honestly "already under construction." Yet after I requested, pursuant to the California Public Records Act:, "all current contracts now in effect for construction of track from Merced to Bakersfield and Coachella and Wasco" the Authority's public records administrator informed me last January that "... the Authority ... has no records responsive to this request." That means no construction contract has been let!

The Authority hasn't even acquired by eminent domain or owner agreement all land parcels needed for project construction. At the end of January, the Authority's honest public records administrator stated that total parcels delivered were 2,167 "compared to an estimated 2,305 parcels needed." Environmental clearance for the promised San Francisco to San Jose, San Jose to Merced, Merced to Fresno, Fresno to Bakersfield, Bakersfield to Palmdale, and Palmdale to Los Angeles segments have been obtained, but there's no funding to build. (Did I hear "idle gesture"?)

Of total authorized Authority positions (429), 328 are filled. The remainder are vacant. The legislature last year finally allowed sale of the remaining $4.2 billion general obligation bonds authorized by taxpaying voters in the Nov. 2008 election, but the public records administrator advises that no records of private investment in the project from 2009 until 2022 exist. The Authority admits the project will cost $77 billion to $113 billion. Where's the money for even a diesel system duplicating Amtrak service in the Central Valley, much less true high-speed electrified trains? That's right: the 119 miles from Merced to Bakersfield will accommodate only diesel trains, not electrified.

The project cost for the non-high speed rail portion in the Central Valley increased last month to $35.3 billion from $25.2 billion. It obtains money from a cap-and-trade program which adds 23 cents to every gasoline gallon besides the state's 53.9 cents tax per gallon. Moreover, President Biden's Department of Transportation denied last month a $1.3 billion requested grant for the project, deeming it not "cost effective." (The only construction to date consists of bridges and viaducts in the Central Valley which, State Senator Brian Jones of San Diego asserts, should be demolished if they can't be "repurposed.")

The remaining project mavens seem to have a reverence for the truth. They always keep a respectable distance from it!

Finally, the Authority claims "... the project will not run diesel trains ..." and is "already electrifying the Caltrain corridor ...." The 2008 $9.95 billion state bond issue included $950 million to connect regional train systems like Capitol Corridor, Caltrain and Metrolink (in the L.A. Basin) to high-speed rail. The Authority instead is spending $775 million in bond proceeds to electrify Caltrain.

Caltrain constitutes regional rail service of about 45 miles limited to one set of tracks, not the needed two if true high-speed trains ever operate on the Peninsula and doesn't under state law need to pay all operating expenses from farebox revenue; High-speed rail does, per the voter-approved 2008 bond issue. It's impossible for it to do so in the Central Valley competing against Amtrak in small cities. It's not building tracks from San Francisco to Los Angeles as it promised voters in 2008. It's building a diesel train system (actually only from Coachella to Wasco in Kern County). As the Authority claims, "electrified rail" is in California statutes, but neither Caltrain nor Metrolink is required by state law to be electrified. High-speed electrified rail's California future doesn't now exist; the 2008 ballot vision stained by subsequent misleading of California voters under post-2008 leadership, which manifestly can't contradict facts. Close the project and convey remaining bond proceeds equally to Caltrain and Metrolink with statewide voter approval.

Quentin Kopp is a former San Francisco supervisor, state senator, member of the SF Ethics Commission and retired judge.

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Trocadero

Continued from page 1

they can to repair it; not to just decide that it's a lost cause," LaBounty said. "It's the most significant building in the southwest part of San Francisco. There's nothing older, or if there is, it's like a house or like a cottage."

And certainly, the Trocadero Clubhouse is far more than a house or a cottage. It's the last of the "roadhouses" in San Francisco.

"That's why it got landmarked," LaBounty said. "I don't want Rec. and Park just to give up on it because they'd rather spend their money on Ferris wheels or whatever.

"So, that is where we are and we're going to see, politically, where we end up," he said.

San Francisco's roadhouses go back to the Gold Rush era and are generally defined as bars or restaurants located on remote roads and sometimes offered overnight rooms to rent. According to the SF Planning Department, most of them were located on the east side of the City, as the west side remained sparsely populated from the 1850s through the early decades of the 20th century.

Built in 1892 as a roadhouse and inn under the direction of George W. Green, it is one of the earliest buildings in the Parkside area and one of the only extant 19th-century structures remaining in southwestern San Francisco.

The building is also architecturally significant as an excellent and well-preserved example of Stick-Eastlake architectural style.

"The Trocadero is a tangible touchstone to our neighborhood's past that would be irreplaceable if lost," Nicole Meldahl, executive director of the Western Neighborhoods Project, said. "The building has lived many lives and can tell many stories."

Indeed, until it became part of Rec. and Park in the 1930s, it hosted quite a few interesting characters from San Francisco history.

At the turn of the century, the Trocadero was described as a "roadhouse, a cabaret and a resort all rolled into one," and often served wealthy men traveling between the City and their estates down the Peninsula in Atherton and Belmont.

However, in a trajectory common to roadhouses, the Trocadero quickly began to be associated more with vice than well-heeled men or family recreation, according to architectural historian Stacy Farr of the Architectural Resources Group for the SF Planning Department.

"Headlines made oblique references to the rougher edges of society" at roadhouses, including the Trocadero, with incidences of assault, robbery, and the presence of "females of questionable character," Starr wrote.

"In 1907, political boss Abe Ruef chose the Trocadero as his hiding place after he was indicted during the San Francisco graft trials. Ruef and a 'female consort' were the only guests when they were captured by detectives in what made for spectacular front-page news," Starr reported.

"The Trocadero history I connect with most is the Mabel Hawkins-era," Meldahl said. "She leased the building and its grounds in 1910 and opened the Women's Outdoor Club (WOC) there, which taught women employable skills and hosted suffragette meetings.

"California allowed women to vote nine years before they could vote nationwide and it's because of women like Mabel. So, it's her I think of when the Troc's floorboards creak beneath my feet because I know she's walked

Continued on page 7

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ADOPT A SENIOR

I am a senior lady who needs a place to live at a private residence in the west area of San Francisco or Daly City. I have excellent references, am quiet, read a lot, am good company and live by Christian values. Call 415-561-9275 if you or someone you know can provide me a home.

BEST BUDDIES FRIENDSHIP WALK

The Best Buddies Friendship Walk is the leading walk in the country supporting inclusion for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). Join 600 walkers on Saturday, April 22, 8 a.m.-noon in Golden Gate Park to support Best Buddies programs in schools, workplaces and communities. You'll be making the world more welcoming to people with IDD – one friendship, one job, and one life-changing connection at a time. The event is free and open to all ages and abilities. To learn more, go to bestbuddiesfriendshipwalk.org/sanfrancisco.

COMMENTARIES AND LETTERS

From the editor: All commentaries we publish are the opinions of the writers and should not be considered our editorial stance on issues. We strive to remain neutral and offer a balance of points of views. We invite readers who wish to express their opinions to send a letter to the editor to Editor@RichmondSunsetNews.com. Word limit for the newspaper is 350, for the website, 500. RichmondSunsetNews.com.

DAHLIA PLANT AND TUBER SALE

The annual dahlia plant and tuber sale will be held at the Hall of Flowers in Golden Gate Park (Ninth Avenue and Lincoln Way) on Saturday, April 22, 9:30 a.m. until sold out (usually noon). For additional information, call 415-994-2448.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Felton Institute, a non-profit social services provider, has an opening for a community liaison: The part-time temporary position is with the Community Liaison Program, Department of Disability and Aging Services (DAS). Job duties: Provide technical assistance by teaching basic computer skills on a smart device (smart phone, tablet or laptop). Skills include downloading and using the Zoom app, teaching Google Services, as well as navigating the internet to access resources helpful for daily living. Enjoy working with older adults and people with disabilities. Proficient in Cantonese and English. Send resume to Jobs@felton.org.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Happy April birthday to Jimmy Baker Jr., Linda Cresci, Lindsay Emrick, Shlomit Heller, Lulu J., Noah J., Vince Keehan, Liana Luján, Zoë-Elise Quon, Danica N., Andrew P., Baby P., Siva Raj, David Roberts, Faustina Sarah Maria Sullivan, Cameron Young and Ariel Yuan. *To add a name to the monthly birthday list, email Editor@RichmondSunsetNews.com. Free.*

LOST AND FOUND

Found: Man's gold ring, engraved, found on Jan. 21 in the vicinity of Andronico's on Irving Street. If it is yours, email Editor@RichmondSunsetNews.com with a description.

ORTEGA BRANCH LIBRARY TECH POPUP

Ortega Branch Library is providing free basic tech support for older adults and people with disabilities in the Sunset District this month. Ask questions to learn basic skills and how to navigate your smartphone, tablet or laptop. Co-Hosted by the Ortega Branch Library, SF Tech Council, Felton Institute, and other service providers. Drop in for a one-on-one session in English, Cantonese and Mandarin on Friday, April 28, 1:30- 3 p.m. at the Ortega Branch Library (3223 Ortega St. at 39th Ave.). Refreshments and raffle for a free tablet! For more information, call Karla Suomala at 510-829-9149 or email karla@sftechcouncil.org.

OUTER SUNSET FARMERS MARKET AND MERCANTILE

Join us every Sunday at the Outer Sunset Farmers Market and Mercantile, where you can find fresh produce from local farmers and ranchers, enjoy delicious dishes from Outer Sunset eateries and discover unique finds from local makers and artisans. Every Sunday, you can find a revolving series of live performers, engaging activities and exhibitions at the ArtShip and fun zone! Our farmers market accepts WIC, EBT and Market Match! 37th Avenue at Ortega Street, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Go to sunsetmercantilesf.com or call 415-465-2475 for more details.

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Tyrone Bartoli has been a professional photographer since 1995. He is available for a wide range of photo shoots. Call for a free consultation: 415-846-7838. Also, check out his Instagram page @tyronebartoli. Ask for the Sunset Beacon discount. Learn more at TyroneBartoli.com.

STAMP COLLECTOR AND STAMP COLLECTIONS

Stamp collector is buying stamps and stamp collections. I am buying the "older stamps" from the 1800s to 1930. American Philatelic Society member since 1986. Pictures are appreciated. Call or text message 415-533-0761.

THANK YOU!

Sincere thanks to the Sunset Beacon readers who generously donated to the Nourish Your Neighborhood Newspaper campaign. Your contribution will help keep us financially healthy. To donate, please send a check to: Sunset Beacon, P.O. Box 16035, SF, CA, 94116 or send via PayPal to Editor@RichmondSunsetNews.com. Thank you!

Announcements: $1 per word, 20-word minimum. Share birthdays, weddings, anniversaries, births, obituaries, graduations, sports highlights, business accomplishments, retirements, college admissions, etc.

FREE: Add a name to the monthly birthday list or submit free community events at no charge.

FREE: There is no charge for occasional announcements for small businesses celebrating an anniversary or other significant milestone or event. Send announcement to Editor@RichmondSunsetNews.com.

Announcements will run in the Richmond Review and Sunset Beacon newspapers (36,000 copies) and on RichmondSunsetNews.com (more than 20,000 views per month). Ads must be pre-paid. Deadline: 20th of the month. Mail check to: P.O. Box 16035, S.F., CA 94116. Call 415-706-6428 or email editor@RichmondSunsetNews.com for more details.

Trocadero

Continued from page 6

these floors before me," she said. "Buildings are so much more than buildings – they're witnesses to our shared past. As a woman indebted to pioneers like Mabel, I sincerely hope Rec. and Park is able to prioritize the recovery of this landmark that means so much to so many of us."

One notable event from December of 1912 was when the WOC announced they would "entertain thousands of dependent tots" at and around the clubhouse for Christmas, meaning children from orphanages and the like, to provide them with Christmas gifts. And when they asked for donations, the response was so overwhelming that it became clear that the event would be much bigger than anticipated.

So big, that they were forced to move the event to Golden Gate Park when 4,200 children signed up. Hotels and cafés were putting out contribution boxes, so by Dec. 19 they anticipated handing out gifts to 10,000 children.

A "small army of approximately 500 women and girls" were organized to help out, according to Meldahl. The event was hugely successful and held in what is now known as the Polo Field with Mayor James Rolph Jr. and the SF Board of Supervisors in attendance.

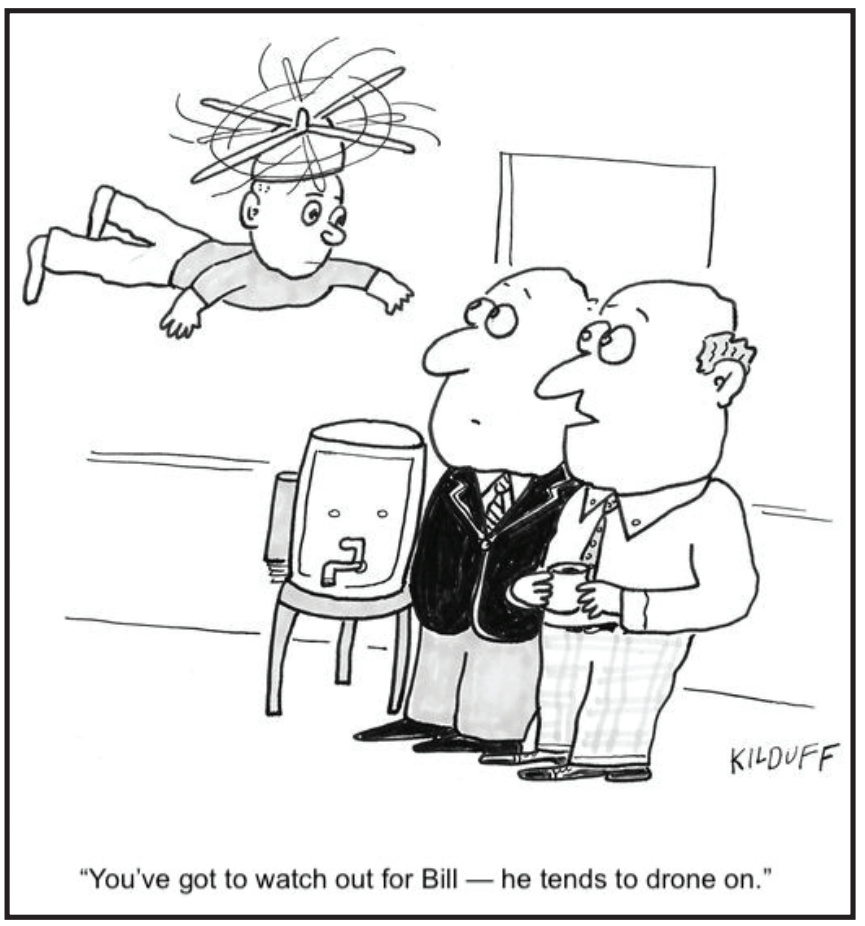
More than 100 vehicles were in a parade for the event, including 20 truckloads of toys and sweets.

"It's a significant building. You don't give up on buildings like that," LaBounty said. "Why would you do that; because you don't have enough money? Get the money. Get the disaster relief money from the state. Do whatever you have to do."

During a recent storm, an 85-foot-tall eucalyptus tree fell onto the roof of the historic Trocadero Roadhouse causing significant damage. ***Photo courtesy of SF Rec. and Park.***

Kilduff's Korner

by Paul Kilduff



"You've got to watch out for Bill — he tends to drone on."

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Assembly

Assemblymember Phil Ting

Earned Income Tax Credits Explained

The state of California recently aligned its state tax filing deadline with the Internal Revenue Service. That means for residents living in the 51 of 58 counties declared a disaster zone due to recent storms, including San Francisco, they have until Oct. 16 to turn in their returns.

But if you earned $30,000 or less last year, I strongly encourage you to file as soon as you can so that your tax refund can arrive sooner. Prices are higher on almost everything we buy; global inflation has been taking a bite out of everyone's budget. It's especially hard for low-wage workers, often forcing them to cut an expense in order to afford something else.

But there are programs called Earned Income Tax Credits (EITCs), which have been around for years to help give struggling families some financial breathing room. If you earned less than $30,000 last year, I hope you'll take advantage of these tax refunds. Depending on the size of your household, the checks can be sizable – up to $3,417.

In California, CalEITC is considered one of the most effective tools to help lift people out of poverty, putting thousands of dollars into the pockets of folks who need them the most. And for families with young children, the Young Child Tax Credit (YCTC) can add another $1,083 on top of the CalEITC. Increasing the income of low-wage earners not only raises their quality of life, but also stimulates the local economy when EITC tax refunds are spent.

New for the 2022 tax season is a Foster Youth Tax Credit, providing up to $1,083 for 18- to 25-year-olds placed in the foster care system when they were age 13 or up. Many of these young adults face challenges as they enter adulthood; this financial assistance is designed to help them meet expenses.

As chair of the Assembly Budget Committee, I know the value of EITCs and fought over the years to raise the income limit for CalEITC, and pushed for the inclusion of young adults, seniors aged 65+ with no dependents, and self-employed workers. More recently, the legislature allowed Individual Taxpayer Identification Number holders to also claim the state tax credit. For the 2021 tax year, more than 3.6 million Californians were able to claim CalEITC, YCTC or both, putting more than $1 billion back in their wallets.

Unfortunately, not everyone eligible to claim the CaIETC does so, leaving millions of dollars on the table. There is also the federal EITC, which can boost tax refunds even higher. Together, the combined cash back from both programs can be life-changing – sometimes more than $10,000 for households with three or more children.

The key to getting this cash back is to file a tax return. Many miss out on EITCs because they don't typically earn enough money to have to file one, or they don't owe taxes. But the paperwork is necessary to receive a check. The money could be used to pay bills or meet everyday expenses. It can also be put into a saving account for emergencies, something that families living paycheck to paycheck struggle to do. The tax credit also has proven additional long-term benefits, with research showing children whose families receive an EITC refund perform better in school and have better health outcomes. Now, that's a great investment!

Are you or someone you know missing out? Nonprofits operating Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) programs can connect people with free tax preparation services. Filing as soon as possible means you can get your money back faster. Don't wait until October.

For more information, please visit CalEITC4me.org to find out if you qualify, the locations for free tax assistance near you, or how to file a return yourself.

Phil Ting represents the 19th Assembly District, which includes the west side of San Francisco along with the communities of Broadmoor, Colma and Daly City as well as part of South San Francisco. Find an archive of his columns at RichmondSunsetNews.com.

Police Blotter

Battery: 1300 Block of Lincoln Way, Feb. 26, 10:49 a.m.

Officers responded to a report of a battery.

The victim said the suspect, a friend, waited for the victim to walk out of their apartment building. The suspect then punched the victim's face and head before throwing the victim to the ground. The suspect then fled the area.

Robbery: 900 Block of Rivera Street, Feb. 26, 3:35 a.m.

The victim told responding officers that two suspects suddenly approached and pointed a gun at them before demanding the victim's property. The victim believes the suspects had followed them from a club that the victim was at earlier.

Robbery: 2300 Block of Noriega Street, Feb. 28, 2:53 p.m.

Officers responded to a report of a robbery.

The victim stated that they were sitting in their vehicle in a parking lot when two suspects approached and took the victim's property. The suspects immediately fled the area.

Robbery, Brandishing a Weapon: 1800 Block of 39th Avenue, March 2, 6:15 a.m.

The victim stated that his wife observed the suspect stealing their catalytic converter and notified the victim.

The victim took a kitchen knife for protection and confronted the suspect outside. The victim asked the suspect to return the converter, but the suspect responded by brandishing a pistol at the victim before fleeing the area.

Fire Report: 39th Avenue and Ortega Street, March 2, 10:36 p.m.

SFPD and SFFD responded to a report of a fire at West Sunset playground.

The witness reported that three to four juveniles were observed pouring lighter fluid on the flames.

Assault, Outstanding Warrant: Taraval Street and 19th Avenue, March 2, 7:45 a.m.

The victim told responding officers that the suspect had driven past them and had driven through multiple stop signs without stopping.

The victim exited their vehicle and confronted the suspect. The suspect responded by exiting their vehicle and slashing at the victim's neck with a knife, which caused non-life-threatening injuries. A computer check revealed that the suspect had an arrest warrant.

After further investigation, the suspect was arrested.

Possession of Firearm, Battery: 4000 Block of Judah Street, March 3, 7:56 p.m.

A witness reported that they observed, via their surveillance video, the first suspect start a fire inside a trash can.

Shortly afterwards, three other suspects approached the first suspect and a physical fight ensued.

One of the suspects was then observed with a gun, which promoted everyone else to leave the scene.

Assault, Catalytic Converter Theft: 1400 Block of 48th Avenue, March 6, 5:45 p.m.

The victim told responding officers that they had heard sawing noises outside and observed two suspects stealing a catalytic converter.

The victim went outside and attempted to take a video of the suspects. The suspects then drove away but made a U-turn and fired a handgun toward the victim's direction.

No injuries were reported.

Attempted Robbery: 25th Avenue and Lincoln Way, March 8, 10:12 a.m.

A victim entered Taraval Station to report an attempted robbery. The victim said they were driving and stopped at a red light when the suspect suddenly approached the victim's vehicle and broke the passenger's side window.

The suspect then attempted to take the victim's purse, which was in the passenger's seat, but the victim pulled the purse away from the suspect and drove away.

Robbery: 2400 Block of Judah Street, March 12, 1:04 a.m.

Officers responded to a report of a robbery.

The victim said two suspects had brandished a knife at them before taking the victim's property. The suspects then entered a waiting vehicle that was being driven by a third suspect.

Robbery: 36th Avenue and Ulloa Street, March 13, 1:21 a.m.

Officers responded to a report of a robbery. The victim stated that two suspects had brandished a knife at them before demanding the victim's property.

Responding officers located the suspects' vehicle and a vehicle pursuit occurred. With the help of the CHP, the pursuit terminated in the area of 51st Street and Shattuck Avenue in Oakland.

Two suspects were detained and arrested, despite attempting to flee on foot from their vehicle.

Possession of a Weapon: 2100 Block of 24th Avenue, March 17, 2:47 p.m.

Officers responded to a school regarding a firearm that had been located, by an educator, in a student's backpack.

Officers determined that it was a realistic BB gun.

Juvenile Probation instructed the officers to transport the suspect to the Huckleberry Community Assessment and Resource Center.

Possession of an Open Container, Resisting Arrest: Ninth Avenue and Irving Street, March 18, 4:29 p.m.

Officers responded to a report of a person swinging a stick at traffic.

Responding officers arrived the location and observed the suspect with an open container of beer being belligerent.

The suspect was placed in handcuffs, despite resisting arrest, and was later cited.

Probation Violation, Brandishing a Weapon: Taraval Street and 32nd Avenue, March 20, 8:28 p.m.

The victim said they discovered the suspect in the kitchen and escorted the suspect out of the house. However, the suspect became hostile and stated that the residence was their house. Once outside, the suspect brandished a knife at the victim.

Responding officers located and detained the suspect. After further investigation, the suspect was arrested.

Robbery: Irving Street and 17th Avenue, March 21, 5:07 p.m.

The victim said they weere walking when the suspect appeared next to them and demanded the victim's property while holding a gun.

The suspect then fled the area with the victim's property, which included an expensive watch.

Battery: Ulloa and Wawona Streets, March 22, 4:35 p.m.

Continued on page 9

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'Then and Now': Ninth Avenue and Kirkham Street

Muni's 6-line streetcar at Ninth Avenue and Kirkham Street, beside McCambridge Market, 1948. ***Photo courtesy of a private collector/ Western Neighborhoods Project/OpenSFHistory.***

Right: What was once McCambridge Market is now Sunshine Cleaners. The building has not changed much, except for the missing exhaust pipes on the roof. This March 31 photo, taken 75 years after the photo above, shows the 43-Masonic bus has replaced the streetcar line. The photo was taken from the corner of Ninth Avenue and Kirkham Street, near the front door of the Roxie Market and Deli. ***Photo by Michael Durand.***

POLICE BLOTTER

Continued from page 8

A victim came to Taraval Station to report a battery.

The victim stated that they were walking when the suspect came up from behind and grabbed at the victim's backpack, causing the victim to fall. Five other suspects then punched the victim before they all fled the area.

Discharging a Firearm: 43rd Avenue and Kirkham Street, March 23, 5:56 a.m.

A victim said they had been walking their dog when they observed the suspect attempting to break into a vehicle. The victim yelled at the suspect and then tried to take a photo of the suspect with their phone.

The suspect immediately got into a nearby vehicle and drove past the victim before coming to a stop. The suspect then exited the vehicle and began shooting – without pointing towards the victim – at the ground with a gun and then shooting down the street.

The suspect then fled the area.

Send letters, comments and suggestions to:

Editor@ RichmondSunsetNews.com

Therapeutic Recreation Family Day Builds Confidence

By Kate Quach

Huddling under the washed gray sky, families slowly formed a line at Glen Canyon Recreation Center. They waited with anticipation to enter a wood-paneled gymnasium filled with activities ranging from archery to rock climbing and floor parkour.

Underneath the surface of fun and exercise, the Therapeutic Recreation Family Day and similar events hosted by the Therapeutic Recreation Inclusion Services team showcase an even deeper collection of stories that display both the unique resilience and joys of life for families with children with disabilities.

"We look for activities that are tailored for Gabriel because he has neuro diversity and he's also on the autism spectrum," said Stephanie Stewart, a resident of the Richmond District, as she cheered on her son Gabriel while he engaged in the archery simulation. For Stewart and Gabriel, they turn to the Therapeutic Recreation Inclusion Services team to find "the events where he's going to feel included."

Oftentimes, Gabriel struggles with crowded, busy social settings. When first finding programs to enrich her 13-year-old son, Stewart detailed the lengthy efforts she took before enrolling Gabriel in activities that best suited his needs.

"We've tried different sorts of camps, and he gets lost in the mix," Stewart said. "There are just too many faces and too many kids and not as many adults. He just needs that little bit of extra special attention."

Stewart also expressed initial nervousness when introducing Gabriel to adaptive play camps.

"We were just wondering, 'Would he would he be around kids that are like him or at the same levels as him?'"

Centering her enthusiasm on the archery activity during the Family Day, Stewart spotted Gabriel stepping up to the aiming line. With the individualized help of a Therapeutic Recreation Staff member, Gabriel released the string of the bow from his grasp. The arrow whistled through the air before pinning onto the bullseye of the velcro target rings. Gabriel burst into a smile of amazement, and Stewart beamed back, appreciating how one-on-one guidance during the activity made him "feel more confident and less anxious."

Directing the many archery stalls at the event stood 11th grader Yazkira Reyes, who guided interested youth in floating balloon target practice. As an intern for the Therapeutic Recreation Inclusion Services for the past six months, Reyes found her experience as the oldest child in her family shining through to her work during the Family Day.

"I have siblings, so taking care of them makes me want to also help other children," she said. "It feels like everyone's a family."

Matteo always found a family in Therapeutic Recreation's camps and activities since he was very little. Now 10 years old, he springs past his mom, Marcela Guerrero, and rounds the corner to meet a spacious indoor rock-climbing course, coloring sheets and crosswords spread across tables, and a corner for a life-sized Connect

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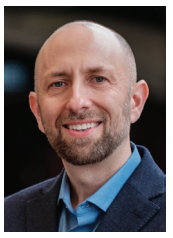
City Hall



Supervisor Joel Engardio

Where Are the Police in SF?

Parents are on edge after recent violence at Stonestown Mall where mobs of teenagers attacked other teenagers. If kids can't safely meet friends after school at the mall, it's yet another decline in quality of life in San Francisco and failure of our City to function as it should.

Residents ask, where are the police?

The police station serving the Sunset has lost half of its officers since 2020. On any given night, only seven officers are patrolling an area from Twin Peaks to the ocean and Golden Gate Park to Daly City.

We are short 500 officers citywide because few want to be a police officer in San Francisco anymore. Many officers are choosing early retirement and we will lose hundreds more in June. Some take jobs in other cities where they feel more supported. Others are simply leaving the profession.

Applications to SFPD are anemic. The last police academy only graduated 12 new officers. Years ago, the typical class graduated 50 officers – and there were multiple classes a year. The current academy only has eight cadets.

A number of city supervisors have called for defunding or even disbanding the San Francisco police department in recent years. This made police officers feel unwelcome and it turned off potential recruits.

We need to change the narrative about police in San Francisco. Instead of saying defund and disband, we should recognize their good work. The California Department of Justice praised our police department for implementing more than 90% of needed reforms. Nationally, SFPD is a model of reform.

Our officers are diverse. They're committed to accountability and serving at the highest standard. Let's acknowledge and praise that, so more people will want to become police officers in San Francisco.

Residents are asking for more police protection. They want officers walking the neighborhoods and patrolling business districts. Whenever there is a crisis, like the mob violence at Stonestown Mall or the open-air drug market in the Tenderloin, there is a call for more police presence.

People must be held accountable for their crimes. Drug dealers peddling death must be arrested and prosecuted. But this isn't just about arresting people and throwing them in jail. Visibility is a deterrent. If officers are on the street corners and walking in the mall, their presence stops bad things from happening.

We will never have the level of police visibility we need when we are short 500 officers. And we will never hire enough officers if they don't feel welcomed and supported by city leaders. The police officers who remain on the job care a lot about our City. They want to help, but they need our support.

In the past month, the Board of Supervisors has reaffirmed some core values in our City – sanctuary protections for immigrants and reparations to right historical wrongs against generations of Black San Franciscans. City supervisors must also stand up for the basic value of public safety.

Residents should be able to walk down the street, go to school, ride Muni or shop in San Francisco without fear of being attacked. Residents should be able to park their car on the street and not return to a smashed window, stolen bags or car parts sawed off.

Let's not forget the ordinary majority of San Franciscans who just want a clean, safe City that works. They are the ordinary and exhausted majority who work hard, pay taxes and follow the rules. They expect city supervisors to enact policies that will keep them safe. That's why City Hall must make public safety a budget priority.

I co-sponsored with the mayor a police budget supplemental to cover the overtime costs that come with existing officers covering the shortage. Overtime is not a long-term solution. We need more people willing to be police officers in San Francisco.

I go out of my way to talk to officers at the station serving the Sunset. I'll always remember what one officer told me: "Helping is at the heart of policing."

The officer further explained: "I've carried groceries and pushed people uphill in their wheelchair. There are so many ways people need help, and when you're out there, you have the ability to affect in a positive direction every life you run into."

That's the state of policing in San Francisco today. Let's support it. Let's recruit more officers by making our City a place where they want to work.

Joel Engardio is the District 4 representative on the San Francisco Board of Supervisors. He can be reached at engardiostaff@sfgov.org.

Family Day

Continued from page 9

4 game. Guerrero, a business owner in the Richmond District, caught up to her son just as he gathered around the pillared rock walls.

"It is a great community and I love the opportunities that (Therapeutic Recreation Inclusion Services) is giving to a child with special needs."

Guerrero describes her son, a child with Down Syndrome, as "very active, very intelligent and very determined at what he wants to do." Guerrero supports Matteo's sessions in Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) therapy, which intends to "increase language and communication skills" and "improve attention, focus, social skills, memory and academics." She also recognizes the challenges that new moms of children with disabilities face when finding helpful resources (dsla.org).

"You need to learn to navigate the system to find the research. The most important thing is to connect with parents," she said. "Don't be afraid to talk about your needs or your child's needs. Talking about our special needs connects us to explore more resources."

Steward seconded like-minded advice for recent parents of a child with disabilities.

"Connect to the different activities that are in the City," she added. "Going on social media or finding a Facebook page that has parents who are doing the same thing or looking for support also helps."

Jennifer Wong, therapeutic recreation coordinator for the Rec. and Park Therapeutic Rec. and Inclusion Services team, works alongside Jessica Huey, recreation specialist.

Children eagerly harness up for some rock-wall climbing fun. ***Photo by Kate Quach.***

The two program leaders agree with Guerrero and Stewart's words of recommendation and extend a welcome for parents to reach out to them for future enrichment development.

"As certified therapeutic recreation specialists, we are constantly working on how we can help our participants grow and develop. I think if one person takes away one new recreation skill that's helping them develop into great human beings, then I think we're really doing our job," reflects Wong. She emphasizes her goal of creating a "safe and supportive environment" for all children with disabilities that find comfort within the care of the therapeutic recreation team, like Gabriel has.

For Huey, networking with the families provides opportunities for new parents that Guerrero referred to, as "choices aren't a lot for people with disabilities." In her work, the program director hopes to establish meaningful relationships with the parents and children that involve themselves in her Family Day activities. "I like that human interaction and making it more personable. Connecting with one another, creating a larger support network, not just inside our staff, but really, with each family meeting each other," said Huey.

Wong agrees.

"It's what we do and what we care about."

To learn more, go to sfrecpark.org/1249/Therapeutic-Recreation.

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Golden Gate Park's Sharon Arts Studio Still Inspiring Artists After 55 Years

By Lana Krouzian

For more than five decades, Sharon Arts Studio has been a serene haven for creative activity that has inspired and produced pieces of art that provide worthy contributions to the art world, as well as highly enriching experiences for people's lives.

Nicki Guard, executive director of Friends of Sharon Arts, a nonprofit which supports and partners with the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department's offering of arts and crafts activities for the public, calls the facility "the zone."

"This place engages body, mind and spirit," Guard said. "In every sense, this place is a community, where students and artists can make friends. It is a kind of home, a family feel, an enrichment of life. Being part of the creative process, quite simply, nourishes.

"You meet people from everywhere; it is multi-generational, with multi-level sharing of the values of life. It gives a space for important inner questions to be answered. Taking a break for creativity allows for inner contemplation and finding balance."

Zachary Canter, staff and programs coordinator and site manager for Sharon Arts Studio, said he found his dream job.

"There are endless interesting things going on," Canter said. "I see people from all walks of life, and it allows me to get to see the lives of people who come here. All of them are making something. There is a special atmosphere for people here. In many ways, this beautiful building is like a church; it reverberates into energy and life, of all the people who have come and gone. You can feel it in the walls."

"People come to do something they enjoy," said Liz Liu, veteran instructor of ceramics, and more recently of glass art. "They talk, they make friends, they step away from their busy life and make things that are tangible, that you can see, use and take home."

In 1886, William Hammond Hall, California water engineer, submitted a proposal to the City of San Francisco on how best to spend money donated by the estate of businessman William Sharon, to Golden Gate Park. The result of Hall's proposal turned the Sharon Arts building and its immediate surroundings into one of the first public playgrounds in the United States, with its barnyard of animals, carousel, spiral slide, carriage rides and other interesting attractions. A small building adjacent to the Sharon Arts Building was used in the 1950s by mothers and children as a baby-feeding room, while the Sharon Building itself was used for family activities.

Animals were once kept in the basement of the building, with the caretaker of the property and animals of the outside barnyard and playground living upstairs. Today, the basement is being used as a ceramics studio, and the top floor is the jewelry workshop.

The arts and crafts activities at the Sharon Arts Studio started in 1968 and have been in continuous operation ever since.

In 1991, Connie Flannery, Virginia Banta and Kitty McInery – ongoing instructors at Sharon Arts Studio – founded the nonprofit, Friends of Sharon Arts Studio. This came out of an interest of participants and Rec. and Park to strengthen and increase capabilities of the arts programs, provide funding for supplies, additional classes and instructors, and offer workshops, lectures, activities and benefits for members. In its current configuration, Sharon Arts Studio is supported 30% by Rec. and Park and 70% by the nonprofit.

Currently the nonprofit has 800 members, of whom 17% are teens, 38% are seniors, and 45% have jobs and are taking classes after work. Many of the after-work participants are from UCSF. Most participants, as a whole, come from the Richmond and Sunset districts. Programs are open to all.

"Sharon Arts Studio is an institution, as far as I'm concerned," said Judy Piccini, an Inner Sunset resident and 10-year participant in the programs at the studio. "I am retired, I am an artsy person, and I love the community there."

"It's addictive," said Lynn Wilkinson, glass repairer and regular participant at the studio. "Once you start, you keep going with it for years afterwards."

"I make my jewel," said Liu, a 30-year instructor at Sharon Arts.

Nick Lukas, a retired master glass art entrepreneur and Rec. and Park volunteer, describes his process.

"I try to work from the corner of the wooden frame and go outward from there," he said. "It's about problem solving, but it's also supposed to be fun. I try to keep it light."

Connie Flannery is a 30-year master glass artist at the studio.

"I use all the old techniques," Flannery said.

Fundraising events of the nonprofit include the annual Winter Sale, which was held this year at the County Fair Building. Picnic in the Park is planned for Mother's Day, May 13, 1-4 p.m. The event will feature crafts sales from the Studio.

Friends of Sharon Arts has planned a series of talks that cover history, specialized art techniques and other unique topics. The first talk of the series, a history lecture on the Sharon Arts Building and playground, given by SF resident historian Christopher Pollock on March 15, provided interesting perspective and was well attended by members and guests.

Among arts and crafts media offered at Sharon Arts are jewelry, ceramics, life drawing, fine art, watercolor, metalworking, glass art. Registration generally fills up very quickly. Stories from attendees indicate that the lines used to start outside the door at 6 a.m., to assure one's space in classes of their choice. This was facilitated somewhat once registration was placed online. Classes are offered year-round, with sessions of eight to 10 weeks each, fall, winter, spring and summer, with breaks of time in-between. It is a seven-days-per-week operation at Sharon Arts Studio. Weekend and one-day workshops are also available.

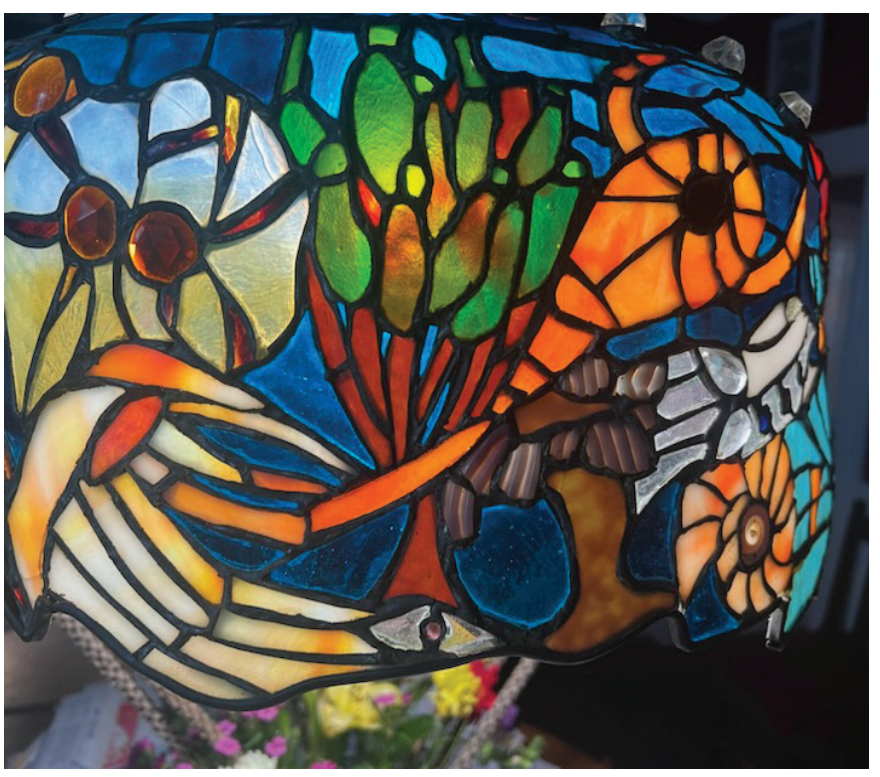
For more information on Sharon Arts Studio, go to sfrecpark.org or sharonartstudio.org.

Connie Flannery, 30-year veteran glass art master. ***Photos by Lana Krouzian.***

Zachary Canter, staff and programs coordinator and site manager for Sharon Arts Studio.

Beveled glass by Connie Flannery.

Nick and Kevin concentrate on the detailed plan for a stained glass project.



Post-Tiffany lamp by Connie Flannery.

The Sharon Arts Building in Golden Gate Park, at Robin Williams Meadow next to the Koret Children's Playground.

Board of Supervisors Approves $26.8 Million Bailout to SFPD for Overtime Pay

Continued from page 1

for the overtime that we're paying."

Taraval Station has lost half its officers in the last four years, from 130 to 65, according to Engardio.

"It's not just about the money," he said. "The last police academy only had 12 graduates. In the current academy there are eight. We need to change the narrative of what it means to be a police officer in San Francisco. It's honorable today to be a police officer in San Francisco. We need to tell people that, so people are willing to apply."

"Right now, at the Northern Station, which is the station that covers most of District 2, we are 50 officers short, and that plays out in many different ways," Stefani said. "All of our neighborhoods are suffering, and I don't know a colleague of mine who hasn't asked Chief Scott or the command staff for more officers in their district because something is going wrong that requires a police officer."

At a March 21 meeting of the Board, however, Preston fired back.

"I believe that SFPD needs oversight at this moment, needs it badly," he said. "And the last thing the department needs is another blank check. The reality here is that police wildly overspent their already increased budget and now want a bailout with more raises, bonuses and unlimited overtime, most of it going to protect luxury retail stores and tourists in areas that are already saturated.

"It's worth remembering that after getting a staggering $50 million budget increase in the summer of 2022, the department immediately began a reckless spending spree, millions on duplicative overtime to serve downtown interests like Louis Vuitton," Preston said.

From statistics provided by the SFPD to the Board, overall it seems that more officers and resources have gone into the Central Station – the station that covers Union Square and that handles many parades – than most of the others in the last year.

After the debacle of Union Square looting in late 2021, the SFPD was not about to let that happen twice, so they raised their profile there last holiday season.

"Rather than seeking approval, while running up these massive bills in the fall of 2022, SFPD continued overspending as if money were no object," Preston continued. "No other department in this city could or would even try to get away with this kind of financial mismanagement. The mayor didn't even seek this supplemental until SFPD had already overspent by over $22.1 million … before the mayor even filed or introduced a supplemental request. They have recklessly overspent as if using Monopoly money."

Four years ago, SFPD's Taraval Station had 130 assigned full-duty police officers. Because of a staffing shortage, it now has 65, according to Supervisor Joel Engardio. *Photo by Thomas K. Pendergast.*

Stefani didn't hesitate to return fire.

"This idea that they're just out there protecting Louis Vuitton literally drives me nuts because it is so disingenuous," she said. "What is happening is that we are protecting people because we want them to feel safe to come to downtown to spend dollars because we get sales tax revenue. Sales tax revenue is down. And what does that mean? Why are we facing a $728 million budget deficit over the next two years?

"It's not just 'to protect Louis Vuitton'; it's to make sure that we protect San Franciscans. It's to make sure that people want to come here and shop and visit and tour and have conventions. People don't want to do that if they don't feel the city is safe."

After Chan expressed gratitude for the SFPD's service, she also mentioned the overtime money.

"A supplemental from any city department really should bring to question whether there was mismanagement of city government and public dollars," Chan said. "There seems to be a direction from our mayor to our police department to invest more in downtown, protecting designer bags (more) than our Asian elders.

"We understand that we need to support our small businesses in tackling burglaries and theft. We do need to answer that demand."

David Heller, president of the Greater Geary Boulevard Merchants Association, agrees wholeheartedly. In fact his shop, The Beauty Network, was burglarized twice within three weeks and he has plenty of company.

"On this block alone the UPS store got broken into, the massage place got broken into," Heller said.

He understands that the police are asking for more money to pay for overtime.

"If we give them the money this time are they willing to come and explain how it's going, quarterly?"

Jimmy Chau owns Jimmy's Diamond Glass in the Richmond District and he replaces busted windows. He has noticed a significant increase in that sort of business within the last couple of years and throughout the City, so he estimates he gets about 10 orders per week now, although some are cases of vandalism instead of burglary.

SFPD Chief William Scott took responsibility for the situation, but with a caveat.

"Ultimately the overtime, everything in this department falls upon the department head, which is me," Scott said. "This decision of our spending was not made in a vacuum. We've been working with both the Mayor's Budget Office and the Controller's Office all the way, with predictions about what our spending patterns are."

He also stated that these decisions were not made in secret.

"We knew early on that we were headed for a supplemental and those discussions were ongoing up until the point where the supplemental got before this board," Scott said.

Melgar said the pandemic has changed crime patterns, but tourism is still important to protect.

"The overtime spending that has been done, we can argue whether or not it was effective but the fact is our city lives off of tourism. That's our bread and butter," Melgar said. "It is folks who work in retail downtown but also the people who clean the hotels and work as dishwashers and food servers who are suffering from the situation right now, where people perceive that it is not safe to come to San Francisco and perception is important. We need to address it."

Board President Aaron Peskin gave a historical perspective, saying the dubious goal for a finite number of total SFPD officers was made a generation ago.

"It was silly. It was politics," he said. "It was done on the back of a napkin in a bar in North Beach. It never deserved to be in the Charter, but a whole bunch of supervisors were scared about the politics of public safety, so they voted to put it on the ballot and the voters adopted it.

"We've never met those numbers except for twice. And so I want to disabuse people … on not creating false expectations," Peskin said. "We should not be running around and saying to the population that we are 500 or 600 cops short; it's misleading.

"Between last year and this year, the police department budget, unlike any other department, had a massive year-over-year increase from about $657 million to the current year's budget of $713 million. That is almost a 10% increase that was not enjoyed by other departments."

With their final vote, the supplemental was passed with a 9-2 vote, with supervisors Preston and Shamann Walton voting against.

Letter to the Editor

Editor:

I'm a nanny, and the kids I care for, Kento, age 7, and Miya, age 8, noticed vandalism on the wall of the soccer field at West Sunset ball fields. It seems that there had been a fire and then someone used the ash from the fire to write "HELL TO EVERYONE GAY" on a wall everyone must pass walking onto the field.

We were early for practice and Miya immediately thought to clean it. No question. No hesitation. She was able to remove "gay" with her boot, and got "hell" off with her water and a cloth I had. I had some washable pastels, so she led the way in replacing the hateful message with many loving and welcoming messages, along with a few of her soccer teammates. She asked that I send this story to the news, with her picture.

Please don't hesitate to reach out to us, and to share this story. It made my day to see a community of children understand the impact of that kind of hate, and come up with a beautiful and immediate solution.

Tasha Amezcua

Ready or Not, the Future Is Here: Driverless Cars Are Already on Our Roads

By Linda Badger

For nearly a decade, futuristic-looking Waymo and Cruise "autonomous vehicles" (AVs) have roamed the streets of tech-forward San Francisco, with human "safety" drivers behind the wheel. These AVs were being programmed and tested for the day when they could transport passengers and goods without human drivers and "transform the transportation system." While our transportation system is yet to be transformed, driverless cars are here.

If you think you've seen one of these cars in your neighborhood, with no one at the wheel, your eyes are not deceiving you. Both Waymo and Cruise are sending "unmanned" driverless cars onto San Francisco streets as part of a pilot program overseen by the California Public Utility Commission (CPUC).

The scene above will likely be a familiar sight thoughout San Francisco for many years to come: A car driving by without a person in the driver's seat. *Photo by Linda Badger.*

The CPUC has imposed numerous restrictions on when, where and how the companies can operate commercial passenger services using AVs in San Francisco. For example, Cruise (funded by General Motors) can offer its driverless passenger service for a fee, but only between the hours of 10 p.m. and 6 a.m., at a maximum speed of 30 m.p.h., and not in the City's crowded downtown core. Waymo (owned by Alphabet/Google) can operate at all hours, up to 65 m.p.h., but must have a human "safety" driver present to charge a fee for rides.

Waymo has been able to clock fully driverless hours by offering free rides to its employees and to adventuresome members of the public who signed up for free rides on the "Waymo One" ride hailing app. Since December 2022, Cruise has partnered with USF to offer students free rides in its driverless taxis.

In December 2022, both companies petitioned the CPUC to lift nearly all restrictions on their operations in San Francisco. Both Cruise and Waymo tout impressive safety records, although Waymo has been more transparent. After more than 1 million miles of driverless rides in cities like Phoenix and San Francisco, Waymo reported no injuries; only two collisions significant enough for a car to be towed; and 18 minor "contact events," none of which involved pedestrians or bicyclists. Fifty-five percent of all events involved human error. The companies point out that their cars are never distracted, drowsy, drunk or speeding while on the road.

Nevertheless, in January, the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency, the San Francisco County Transportation Authority and the Mayor's Office protested the companies' requests for nearly unlimited permits, calling for a more incremental approach.

While the prospect of all-electric, driverless cars is exciting and taking the "human" factor out of driving has some appeal, the City's concerns are understandable. There have been incidents where AVs have unexpectedly stopped, blocking traffic until human "rescue drivers" sent by the company arrived to drive them away. Not to mention the YouTube video of an SFPD officer stopping a Cruise AV on Clement Street because its headlights were off, only to find there was no driver – and then to watch the car inexplicably zip away to the next block. Some of these potential hazards, such as incidents of unplanned or unexpected stops, do not have to be reported by the companies, so the City is asking for more data and transparency.

Between May 2022 and Dec. 31, 2022, the City learned of 92 separate incidents of unplanned and unexpected stops, mostly involving Cruise AVs. City officials assert that this number is too high, and that the effect on public transit, traffic and safety will only grow once AVs are allowed to operate without limitation on city streets. The City is particularly concerned that stalled AVs will result in more Muni delays.

The City's protest also describes a handful of incidents involving the City's emergency services. On several occasions, AVs reportedly interfered with active fire scenes, running over a fire hose, for example. Emergency services were also unnecessarily deployed in several incidents in which AVs summoned 911 due to "unresponsive passengers," who had simply fallen asleep during their robo-rides.

Moreover, the City pointed out that there is no government oversight as to how many AVs Cruise and Waymo decide to deploy in San Francisco, which some believe already has too many cars crowding its narrow streets. Unaddressed is the impact AVs could have on the many Bay Area residents who make a living by offering ride share, delivery and taxi services.

To date, it is uncertain the affect AV passenger services will have on our transportation system. Before a decision is made to go beyond the present pilot program, the City wants more data, more study and more oversight. On the other hand, the companies want to move forward, promising safer streets and fleets of electric vehicles that are better for the environment.

Whether thrilled or terrified by the prospect of driverless car services operating freely in San Francisco, buckle your seatbelts: The CPUC is set to decide this contentious issue by mid-May 2023.

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Kehinde Wiley's 'An Archaeology of Silence' Exhibit Aims to Create a Religious Feeling

By Noma Faingold

"Art should show you something you've never seen before."

– Kehinde Wiley

Kehinde Wiley's "Reclining Nude in Wooded Setting." ***Photo by Michael Durand.***

The gallery walls are painted a saturated, deep brick color. They envelop. Each room is as dark as a theater, right as the play is about to start. Spotlights hit the billboard-size paintings and larger-than-life sculptures for maximum drama. You cannot look away.

Kehinde Wiley's most ambitious exhibit, "An Archaeology of Silence," which opened at the de Young Museum on March 18 and runs through Oct. 15, will inspire, unsettle, disarm and maybe change the outlook of those who experience it.

"I wanted to create a kind of religious feeling in the museum space," Wiley said. "I'm insisting upon the sacred and the profane in that way."

Wiley plays with the scale (his largest and smallest works share the spaces) and fearless composition to provide an atmosphere both intimate and epic; heroic and fragile.

"I am attempting to create a sense of awe, a sense of power and vulnerability," he said.

Los Angeles-born Wiley, 46, who earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree at the San Francisco Art Institute (SFAI) and an MFA at Yale University, mastered the Old Masters before turning traditional portraiture into heightened realism full of dichotomies. He became most known for taking classic western art motifs and painting his subjects (mostly unknown Black men), whom he selected through street casting and painting them in noble, austere poses, previously reserved for aristocrats and royalty. Wiley always made sure the details of hair and attire were of the moment, often referencing pop culture, from casual streetwear to luxury brand logos.

"So much of my work has been about these large-scale portraits of people standing proud, being celebrated in their own illustrious light and lending that power to people who happen to look like me," Wiley said. Wiley is perhaps best known for being selected by Barack Obama to paint his official presidential portrait for the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery. The unconventional, celebrated portrait toured several U.S. museums last year, including the de Young.

In "An Archeology of Silence," which premiered last summer during the Venice Biennale and makes its U.S. debut at the de Young, Wiley takes a sobering turn in depicting the fallen in sculptures and paintings – heroes, martyrs, saints and victims – Black men and women mostly in supine positions.

"It's asking a lot of the viewer to be able to see all that," Wiley said.

The exhibition's title comes from a book by the French philosopher Michel Foucault, referring to societal suppression. The vulnerable portrayals of Black people struck down, wounded, resting or dead are haunting. "An Archeology of Silence" is a piercing statement about systemic violence against Black people. Yet Wiley also insists on delivering an uplifting message. "Sure, it's a downer," he said, "but this work is about the desire to be seen, to be defiantly alive. I'm not just creating a political statement, I'm creating a much more personal, poetic and spiritual one."

To balance the bleakness, Wiley features decorative imagery, such as flowers and overgrown vines. "The landscapes are sparkling with life," he said. "The decorative filagree is demanding space.

"Even in death and decay," Wiley said, "there's an insistence upon beauty and grace, even in the worst of what humanity has to throw at you. There's a stubborn holding onto life and celebration in the midst of all this suffering. I'm tired of seeing the work of African Americans only relating to suffering."

The centerpiece of the show has the same title as Wiley's exhibit: "An Archaeology of Silence." Bronze sculpture, 2021. ***Photo by Noma Faingold.***

While a few or these works first emerged in 2008 in Wiley's exhibit, "Down," in New York, the 25-piece "An Archeology of Silence" expanded greatly during the height of the pandemic. Wiley spent much of that time in Dakar, Senegal, where he set up a multidisciplinary artist-in-residence program called Black Rock. Senegalese people became his models for new paintings and sculptures, making the concept more global. At the same time, Wiley felt more of an urgency to share his art after the George Floyd murder in 2020 and once the Black Lives Matter movement took hold.

The centerpiece of the exhibit (created in 2022 and given the title, "An Archeology of Silence"), is a 17.5-foot-tall bronze sculpture of a shirtless dead Black man, draped over a majestic horse. It's Wiley's response to seeing monuments in Virginia of triumphant Confederate officers on horseback.

"I have been blessed enough to bear witness to some of the horrors that we all have," he said. "And I've been blessed enough to have the tools to do something about it."

Wiley was raised by a single mother of six children in South Central Los Angeles. His father, who had been a scholarship student in the U.S., had to return to Nigeria when his visa ran out. Wiley wasn't able to connect with him again until he was 20 years old, thanks to a Fulbright grant. Jeremy Stone, who was an advisor of Wiley's at the SFAI and assisted with his grant application, remembers him as a quiet, focused and thoughtful student. She has kept in touch with him.

"He was working on technique and craft, but he knew what he wanted to do," said the art appraiser, who has her own San Francisco-based company, Business Matters in the Visual Art.

For Wiley, the exhibit being in San Francisco feels like a homecoming.

"The Bay Area is a coming of age for me. I would argue that the Bay Area is a coming of age for America," he said. "This part of the world was at the core of the cultural revolution that America was so heavily marked by at the end of the '50s and the core of the '60s. It became the site of resistance for people of color, for the marginalized, for the queer, for the inconvenient. San Francisco is that place where people question authority and assumptions."

Abram Jackson, director of interpretation for the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, tackled maximizing community involvement by seeking out several activist organizations as partners to help shape the overall experience of the exhibit.

"We had to localize it," said Jackson. "We had to be really intentional and caring for our visitors."

Contributions by the group of advisors include edits of the wall text and altering the language of some materials. For example, the phrase of "Black bodies" shifted to "Black people" and "state-sanctioned violence" was changed to "systemic violence."

Rev. Wanda Johnson, founder of the Oscar Grant Foundation (and mother of Oscar Grant, who was murdered on the train platform at Fruitvale Station by a BART police officer in 2009), provided commentary on a couple of paintings for the audio guide.

Jackson worked with the FAMSF's Director of Public Programs and Community Engagement, Devin Malone, to create the Respite Room, adja-

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Review: Gregangelo Museum

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Museum today, he attended St. Ignatius College Preparatory High School when it was still an all-boys school after not getting into his top pick, Lick-Wilmerding.

Making the best of his path and grateful for the memorable instruction of St. Ignatius artist teacher Katie Wolf, who is still a current faculty member, Herrera followed his creative instincts by participating in arts activities at the Sunset District school. He also developed a whirling dervish act with the San Francisco dance company, Aswan Dancers.

Herrera went on to pursue his own individual major at the California College of Arts and Crafts (CCAC), now known as the California College of the Arts (CCA), and expanded his horizons thereafter by traveling the world and performing. Although he has studied and worked in many mediums, his work is rooted in performance art.

So, what exactly is the Gregangelo Museum? Open Thursday through Saturdays, the home is a living work of art where science and art collide, and the mysteries of the ancient world and universe are woven together into a kaleidoscopic sensorial portal.

Guests are guided through rooms themed and filled with anything and everything under the sun – fabrics, mosaics, murals, mystical installations, sculptures, North African and Middle Eastern decor, and just about anything that can be imagined.

Forget the conventional norms of white-walled art museums, galleries and all preconceptions about yourself and the world upon entering the residential home turned cutting edge living museum.

"You're in the art and the art is extracting your story," Herrera said.

Exploratory contemplation, innovation, connection and fun abound in this one-of-a-kind experience that truly must be experienced to be appreciated.

Herrera also makes it clear that, "firstly, this is not a performance venue. This is my home and it accidentally started taking on a life of its own."

Four decades ago, he began adorning each room with unique finds from his world travels and art pieces both commissioned and home fashioned. Through word of mouth, friends, family, artists, architects and designers were interested to see his home for inspiration and he allowed a limited number of people to come by informally. Herrera adds one caveat, "I always allow artists to come."

In addition to inviting students to intern and tour the space, Herrera champions the arts by hosting a weekly Thursday event, "Let's Do Lunch," which welcomes artists from all over the world to break bread together and cross cultures and ideas over a delicious homemade spread.

"It wasn't until right after the pandemic that it was out of necessity (to open the museum formally), and we had to because arts and culture, and our corporate and events business was gone," Herrera said.

Herrera said he feels like "an endangered species right now" and "has been lucky to have had enough energy to keep finding new ways (to move forward), because it's never easy sailing."

Though some art and performance venues have begun to slowly open their doors and continue work, not all made it through the last three years, especially when public performance gatherings were the first commodity to go.

Visiting students from a California College of the Arts glass class walk through The Midnight Hall, a corridor in the museum inspired by "secret passages of tombs leading to sacred treasures."

Outside of the museum itself however, the home is also a buzzing artists' lab, studio, idea incubator, costume workshop and headquarters of the entertainment company, Velocity Arts and Entertainment, helmed by creative director Marcelo Defreitas and Herrera, who serves as artistic director. The two joined forces five years ago after working on an event for La Luz Center, a non-profit that directly works with the Latino community in Sonoma.

Defying any prescription for how to do things, the company's tagline on its website is "think outside the circle."

Thousands of events later, and after working with numerous artists and performers to put on state-of-the-art entertainment experiences, they continue to successfully do just that.

The core team of artists and creatives who come to work at Herrera's home create immersive entertainment experiences for non-profits, large venues, private events and some "weddings for weirdos," as Herrera calls them, if the project aligns.

Tour guide and facilitator Nick Brentley greets tour guests at the entrance of the Gregangelo Museum at the start of the museum's private indoor tour activation, "Into the Rabbit Hole." The unique museum is within a home in the St. Francis Woods neighborhood. *Photos by Alyson Wong.*

What sets the team apart from Cirque du Soleil or other performance art experiences is that they include interactive, immersive and experiential elements to bring stories to life that provoke contemplation and connection. The current project they are working on is an experiential performance based on endangered species commissioned by a long-term client, the California Academy of Sciences.

The high-quality craft and joy that flow from the creative team keeping Velocity Arts projects and the museum running is palpable.

The team includes Darkhijav Damla, a Mongolian professional dancer who has been working with Velocity Arts for the past 22 years as a wardrobe designer. Marina Polakoff from Russia and designer Monica Paz Soldan join her in the colorful costume-filled workshop downstairs. Social Media Manager Angelica Irreno is an artist sponsored from Colombia who handles the team's social media and marketing efforts, and Aaron Duffy manages artists and production alongside Nick Brentley who guides guests on museum tours. Ian Fratar, an artist, juggler and bubble person from Oakland has also built installations and worked with the team for many years.

Herrera has actively championed the arts and continues to challenge the notion that art is not essential. He was recently awarded a certificate of honor from the San Francisco Board of Supervisors recognizing his positive contributions to the cultivation of the arts and cultural landscape of the City. To continue his efforts, he is also diligently working on a city proposal to reinvigorate the hospitality industry (including hotels, convention centers, restaurants and installation spaces) by targeting areas within San Francisco that have been hard hit by the pandemic.

With both feet firmly on the ground and a bold gaze to the sky, Gregangelo has cultivated a space that brings people together, inspires joy and expands peoples' ideas of what's possible. His hope is that the living system he has helped nurture will encourage others to "be in the present moment, engage, be reflective and get to know each other better." He calls his home a "connectatorium," and what could be more important today?

Learn more at gregangelo-museum.com.

Kehinde Wiley

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cent to the exhibit to give visitors space to pause and process. There's also a resource room where educational, grief and mental health materials will be available.

Wiley is considered a rock star in the art world. Some have called him a genius. He's building an empire – not just for himself. In addition to Black Rock, he has studios in Beijing and Brooklyn and is providing opportunities for young artists to develop. Who knows what's next for him? He's just as likely to look inward for inspiration as he is to find a new muse anywhere in the world. "If you really think about my entire body of work, it's a self-portrait," said Wiley. "Who's looking?"

Kehinde Wiley: An Archaeology of Silence runs from March 18 to Oct. 15, at the de Young Museum. Free weekends (one per month) is sponsored by $1 million grant from Google.org. There will also be grief workshops. For more information: www.famsf.org.

To balance the bleakness, Wiley features decorative imagery, such as flowers and overgrown vines. "The landscapes are sparkling with life," he said. "The decorative filagree is demanding space." *Photos by Michael Durand.*

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